

[1 March, 2007]

RAJYA SABHA

all necessary steps to safeguard the security interests of the country, including along the border.

#### **Harassment of Indians in Afghanistan**

†320. SHRIMATI MAYA SINGH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the religious places of the Hindus are being defaced and their habitation being destroyed in Afghanistan;

(b) if so, the action taken by Government in this regard; and

(c) whether Government have such data which may provide correct information of the oppression being done to the Hindus over there?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) There are no reports of religious places of Hindus being defaced and their habitation being destroyed in Afghanistan.

(c) During the nearly three decades of strife and conflicts in Afghanistan, there was widespread destruction of life and property, including those belonging to the Afghan Hindu community. After the overthrow of Taliban in 2001, the Indian Embassy and Consulates in Afghanistan have not received any report of oppression of the Hindu population in Afghanistan. Our Embassy is in regular touch with the Hindu community leaders in Afghanistan.

#### **Agreement with ASEAN countries**

321. SHRI K. CHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether agreements have been signed in various fields with ASEAN countries on the eve of the recently concluded ASEAN-India Summit; and

(b) if so, the details of agreements signed, field-wise?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No agreement was signed between India-ASEAN

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.